

Caught between Internationalism, Transnationalism and Immigration: A Brief Account of the History of Anarchism in Egypt until 1945

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ABSTRACT

Anarchism first appeared in the Southern Mediterranean countries at the end of the nineteenth century with the immigration of European workers and political exiles. Despite the important role anarchists played in introducing radical and revolutionary political thought in Egypt, only historians Anthony Gorman and Ilham Khuri-Makdisi have paid attention to these narratives. The main goal of this article is twofold: on one hand, to analyse the reasons for the paucity of studies related to anarchism in Egypt, and, on the other hand, to delve into the history of anarchism in Egypt before and after the First World War to contribute to the writing of the history of postcolonial Egypt.

This article explores two different anarchist experiences in Egypt. The first one is related to the Italian political exiles in Egypt who developed a strong anarchist movement in the country through the construction of trade unions, educational institutions and study groups. The second experience emerged in the interwar period due to the rise of Fascism and the disillusionment with parliamentary politics through the artistic and revolutionary project of al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya (Art and Liberty Group). Our goal is to demonstrate that before the arrival of Gamal Abdel Nasser, anarchism was a potent political culture and philosophy and an existing way of doing politics in the country. Tracing this hidden history is crucial to understanding the developments of non-party politics in the history of modern Egypt.

Keywords: *anarchism, Egypt, transnational history, migration, al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya, Surrealism*

INTRODUCTION

In 1976 Leonardo Bettini published a two-volume work entitled *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo* (*Bibliography of anarchism*). This included a chapter on the history of Italian anarchism in Egypt, *Appunti per una storia dell'anarchismo italiano in Egitto* (Notes for a history of Italian anarchism in Egypt). This was a pioneer work and the first of its genre dedicated to the history of anarchism in the Mediterranean South. In this initial work, Bettini traced the transnational networks of Italian anarchists: their movement, activities, and most importantly, their publications and personal trajectories. Even though he focused on the Italian anarchist community in the region, he opened a broader perspective on the transnationality of anarchism, one which not only transcended European confinement, as anarchism had already spread to South America, but also its deeply-rooted Western cultural borders. In general terms, anarchist historiography has been silent on the emergence of anarchism in non-Western contexts (Adams 2002). Knowledge of anarchist communities in the South and the East of the Mediterranean has been particularly absent in histories of anarchism.

Thirty years after Bettini's book more research appeared, Anthony Gorman published a series of articles (the most important ones: 2005, 2008, 2010), examining anarchism in the South Mediterranean, and in Egypt in particular, analysing archival material from the Italian and British consulates (until that moment unknown). Ilham Khuri Makdisi published *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism 1860-1914* (2010). This traced radical networks of dissent in the Mediterranean between Beirut, Cairo and Alexandria, and demonstrated the importance of these networks in creating and spreading internationalist ideologies such as anarchism and communism in the region, as well as other repertoires of contentious politics. The importance of these studies is that they demonstrate the close historical relationship between anarchism and political and labour migration in the peripheral regions of the Mediterranean. They also shed some light on the role that the anarchist movement in Egypt played in disseminating radical social and political ideas and practices in a territory that was in the process of being integrated in the global capitalist market. In particular, the work of Khuri-Makdisi made evident the transnationalism and intersections of these radical ideas in the Mediterranean at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

The anarchist movement in Egypt developed principally in the coastal city of Alexandria and in the capital, Cairo. It emerged around 1860 due to the entry and expansion of Egypt in the global economy: work on the Suez Canal and a boom in

cotton production stimulated the arrival of European and non-European migrants looking for jobs (as was also the case in Tunisia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire). Italians, Greeks, French, Syrians and Armenians all arrived in the region and it was from these migrant populations that the first internationalist groups were born. Alexandria and Cairo quickly became important centres for anarchist activities in the Mediterranean, and hubs for networks that extended to Tunis and other coastal cities of the Ottoman Empire, to Europe and South and North America. Anarchism spread significantly between 1898 and 1906, in step with Egypt's rapid economic development and increases in European immigration. Individuals from different social groups and communities came together, bringing a rich mix of ideas to their activism: from labour organising, to cultural gatherings, libertarian education and global solidarity campaigning. After a brief surge of activity in 1909, the movement eventually went into decline between 1914 and 1920. The First World War, the emergence of Bolshevism, bourgeois nationalism and fascism, were some of the reasons why anarchism declined as a major radical force in the region.

This essay traces an anarchist history of Egypt from the arrival of migrant labourers and political exiles in Egypt in 1860, to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1945. We will reconstruct the transnational trajectories of anarchism in the Mediterranean in its global and local dimensions, through its discourses, political and cultural practices, militant stories and counter-narratives, using different archival sources: Italian anarchist journals and newspapers published in Egypt and abroad, Italian consular documents, and cultural magazines in Italian, French and Arabic. Our aims are twofold. First, to add new information and archival materials to the existing research on anarchism in Egypt and, second, to extend this work by including the development of surrealism and its transnational networks of dissent within the history of anarchism in Egypt. We seek to answer the following questions: Under what circumstances did anarchism emerge and spread in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? How can the disappearance of anarchist tendencies in Egypt be explained? What were the repertoires, discourses and narratives of anarchists in Egypt? How and why did libertarian tendencies re-emerge at the end of the '30s? Transnational history, intimately related to the flux of migration, will help us see beyond the nation-state and enable us to trace anarchism's nodal and rhizomatic history and the emergence of radical networks of dissent in the Mediterranean.

The paper is divided into two parts. The first part reconstructs the activities of the Italian anarchist community in Egypt from 1860 to 1914, and the second part traces the counter-cultural surrealist movements from 1930 to 1945. For Italian anarchists, Egypt and other Southern Mediterranean countries, such as Tunisia, were

important places for migration. Indeed, since the beginning of the *Risorgimento*, nationalists and revolutionaries, following Italian immigration routes, had landed on the shores of Egypt and Tunis. According to the available sources, between 1860 and 1870, internationalists, socialists and anarchists of Italian origin were already present and active in great numbers in Egypt, among other workers and political exiles from other European and non-European communities. The urban spaces of Alexandria and Cairo were important centres of encounter and for the dissemination of anarchism to the militants and workers of the Italian, Greek, Jewish, and the Egyptian communities. The anarchist movement in Egypt was therefore born in the encounter of different European militants and non-European militants.

From a transnational perspective, the contacts and relationships that anarchists from different national communities established are fundamental to the historical reconstruction of anarchism in Egypt. Personal trajectories are crucial for the study of transnational history and for tracing the activities, contacts, and ideas of the anarchist movement in any region. To date, no studies have looked at anarchist militants from communities other than the Italian, or from an inter-ethnic perspective in Egypt. The main limitation of our study is that we focus exclusively on the archival material written in Italian and French for the first part of our paper (until 1920). For this reason, this initial study is designed to stimulate further research, above all to explore the Greek archival material.¹ This would provide a more interconnected history of anarchism in Egypt. After the First World War, the self-identifying anarchist movement disappeared from the public sphere in Egypt. Yet anarchism deeply influenced other major ideological movements in the country, notably on the Egyptian left which entered into party politics after 1919 and the counter-cultural groups active in the 30s. With the rise of fascism and disillusionment with parliamentary politics in the interwar period, anti-Stalinist, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist positions emerged, particularly amongst the younger educated groups. For the purpose of elongating the anarchist history of Egypt and to include other repertoires of contentious politics, such as the cultural productions of the radical left, we will focus our attention on the group *al-Fann we al Hurriyya* (Art and Freedom), formed in 1939 by a collection of artists, writers and intellectuals who used their artistic work to rebel against the bourgeois norms of the time.

THE ARRIVAL OF ANARCHISM IN EGYPT

In the second half of the nineteenth century many of the European workers who migrated to North African countries and the Ottoman Empire were advocates of anti-authoritarian socialism and other internationalist ideologies. At the end

of the nineteenth century the Italian community in Egypt² settled in the port city of Alexandria and later Cairo was comprised of Masonic, Carbonarian, Republican and Mazzinian associations. By 1869, the police was aware of the presence of a committee of Italians 'linked to the democratic Mazzinian association'³ in Cairo which later joined the one founded in Alexandria. In the same year the Società Cosmopolita Internazionale (International Cosmopolitan Society) was also founded in Alexandria. This society became the hub for the internationalist currents in the country. Indeed, members of the society organised another Mazzinian-inspired republican society called *Pensiero e Azione* (Thought and Action).⁴ It was responsible for creating the first section of the First International in Alexandria.⁵ The internationalist activists who belonged to these societies were those who funded the first section of the International in Alexandria,⁶ together with the Bakuninist revolutionaries and political exiles who gravitated around Ugo Parrini (1850-1906),⁷ one of the most important characters in the anarchist movement in Egypt. The same year, another internationalist organisation called Società Artigiana Cosmopolita was also founded. It had a brief life.⁸

These groups constituted the basis for an intense anarchist activity in the region. In a short period of time Egypt's two major cities were at the heart of internationalist activities in the Mediterranean region: activists, ideas and publications moved across different countries throughout the Mediterranean region and Egypt became the point of convergence for Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. As Khuri-Makdisi argues, Beirut, Cairo and Alexandria were the nodal cities where militants and intellectuals from the global south furthered their knowledge of radical movements and ideologies.⁹ The history of anarchism in Egypt and that of the Italian anarchists who migrated there offers a good example of a two-level of activity marked by strong affiliation with the internationalist movement, and the attempt to spread 'the idea'¹⁰ in Egypt.

The development of the 'Idea'¹¹

As we noted in the first part of the article, we will briefly summarise the history of the Italian anarchist movement in Egypt, analysing its publications (periodicals, pamphlets, and consular archives), discourses and the personal trajectories of the activists involved. We have devised a chronological periodisation to help us identify the key issues, debates and dynamics of this plural and heterogeneous movement which lasted for more than fifty years evolving significantly during this time. We look first at the period 1877 to 1898, then from 1898 to 1906 and finally from 1909 to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

During the first period, 1877-1898, socialists and internationalists, mainly political exiles, who were members of the Mazzinian and local mutual aid organisations in Italy, arrived in large numbers in Egypt. Detailed information about this period is scarce and we lack precise statistics of this political migration. It was, however, the time when diverse autonomous sections of mutual aid associations in Egypt flourished. Activists from Alexandria, Cairo, Suez, and also, the Delta cities of Aswan, produced significant propaganda, in written and oral form, directed towards the workers of the Italian community in Egypt.¹² In 1877 Andrea Costa (1851-1910)¹³ attended the Grand Socialist Congress following an invitation to create '[a] Federal Office for the propagation of socialism in the regions of the East'.¹⁴ The following year, the young Errico Malatesta arrived in Egypt for the first time. He was soon expelled with some other comrades as a result of the repression that followed Giovanni Passannante's knife attack on Umberto I at a parade in Naples on the 17 November 1878.¹⁵

The period was also marked by attempts to unify and to re-organise the various anarchist groups active in the country. Parrini funded the *Circolo Europeo di Studi Sociali* (European Circle of Social Studies) and a clandestine printing house.¹⁶ The study group offered a space for those, mainly workers, who could not afford education in Egypt. The group served as a platform for discussion and debate. It also had a public library with radical anarchist journals, and literature in various languages. In 1882, Malatesta, having left London where he had represented Egypt in the Internationalist Anarchist Congress the year before, arrived in Alexandria. Together with other comrades, including Parrini, he supported the Urabi revolt,¹⁷ and attempted to transform the nationalist uprising into an armed social revolution. The uprising failed and a year later, in 1883, Malatesta fled to Italy. Many others followed him to Europe after Andrea Costa rejected anarchist principles to pursue a career as a parliamentarian. Costa's turn to parliamentarianism and the failure of the revolution resulted in the temporary paralysis of the anarchist movement in Egypt. We find a group of anarchists called *I Pezzenti* (The beggars) in Alexandria undertaking some modest activity. They were also some anti-organisational anarchists, mainly focused on 'propaganda by the deed'. The split between the individualist and organisational tendencies that the Italian anarchist movement were thus played out in Egypt – as it was also the case in London.¹⁸

The second period of our history begins in 1898 and ends in 1906. This period was a renaissance for the anarchist movement and it is explained by the organisational work of Ugo Parrini and the new influx of anarchists. Among these we find important figures such as Francesco Cini (1857-1933),¹⁹ Roberto d'Angiò (1871-1923),²⁰ Luigi Galleani (1861-1931)²¹ and above all, Pietro Vasai (1866-1916),²²

one of the most important figures in the libertarian movements in Egypt until his departure in 1919. In the years before the First World War French and Greek militants swelled the ranks of the anarchists in Egypt. Egyptians, too, began to follow to socialist ideas, and even anarchism.

In 1898, following the assassination of Empress Elisabeth of Austria by Luigi Lucheni (1873-1910), the international anti-anarchist conference for the Social Defence Against Anarchists was organised in Rome. The main goal of the European states was to organise collective action against the threat of the common danger: anarchism. Using this pretext, the Italian and Egyptian authorities decided to attack the anarchist activists in Egypt. A consular agent placed explosives inside Parrini's tavern in Alexandria. Following a police raid the anarchists were accused of plotting to kill the German Emperor, Wilhelm II. Thirteen people including Parrini and Vasai were arrested and moved to the Qaitbay prison in the Arsenal in Alexandria. The trial ended on 16 January 1899 with the acquittal of all the defendants and the exposure of the plot hatched by the consulate.²³ Undeterred by this set-back, in 1900, the Interior Minister Butros Ghali urged the Italian authorities to take the necessary measures to thwart an alleged plot by an increasingly bold 'anarchist sect' against the Khedive.²⁴

At the start of the century, Egyptian anarchism was a polycentric reality: it had several autonomous sections and centres from which it worked as a movement. Internal relations were often polemical, but also very dynamic. New forms of organisation and resistance were developed, and propaganda strategies were intensified. These also included individuals from other communities. Greeks, Egyptians (above all Jewish Egyptians) and Romanians became part of the movement. At the same time, anarchists began to build the foundations of worker and resistance leagues. A typographers, lithographers, bookbinders' league, and later the cigarette workers, tailors, barbers' league were formed. Many anarchists agitated inside these worker's organisations. Anarchists were the main protest and strike organisers and they acted together with other workers and militants, mainly socialists, overcoming ideological barriers to co-operation.

In 1901 the Università Popolare Libera (Free Popular University) was founded in Alexandria. Its internal statute was written mainly by Luigi Galleani, among other anarchists, workers and local bourgeois intellectuals. The main goal of the university was to extend education to the working classes in order to teach rationalism through the adoption of a libertarian pedagogy. It maintained its autonomy for a year, but the anarchist tendency was soon suppressed by the institution and the administration and management of the university assumed a more liberal-bourgeois stance.²⁵

The project run by Parrini in Cairo in 1902 was an important part of the cultural activism of the first wave of anarchism in Egypt. Parrini established a 'reading salon for anarchist texts' and this included pamphlets and other anarchist literature and journals.²⁶ In Alexandria the Circolo libertario (Libertarian Circle) was founded in order to disseminate anarchist propaganda. A year later, in 1903, Pietro Vasai formed the Circolo di Studi Sociali (Social Studies Circle) for the same purpose. However, one of the most famous and neglected circles of that time was the Baracca Rossa (Red Hovel), attended by anarchists, socialists and sympathisers from a range of ideological and national communities. Enrico Pea (1881-1958)²⁷ and Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1870)²⁸ were among its most prolific members. Developing anarchist mutual aid, Francesco Cini founded the Servizi sanitari d'Urgenza (Urgent Sanitary Services), after an epidemic that hit the city to freely assist the people in need.²⁹

The propaganda work of the anarchist community in Egypt also included transnational solidarity events to commemorate incidents and comrades from other parts of the world. Several ceremonies were organised to celebrate the anniversary of the Paris Commune, international workers day on 1 May and 20 September – marking the completion of Italian unification. Fliers were published and distributed to show solidarity with Leon Czolgoz (1873-1901), the assassin of President McKinley and Gaetano Bresci, assassin of the Italian king, Umberto I (1869-1901).

The period was marred by intense internal divisions, which not even the lawyer Pietro Gori (1865-1911) could solve. In 1904, the movement split on the question of organisation or anti-organisation: associative anarchism versus individualistic anarchism. The movement was also divided on territorial lines, between the branches in Alexandria and Cairo. These two cities adopted alternative ways of understanding the theory and the practice of anarchism. Their differences could be explained by the presence of two journalistic trends in the cities. One of them, *L'Operaio* (*the Worker*), was published in Alexandria between July 1902 and April 1903 and edited by Pietro Vasai and Roberto D'Angiò. *L'Operaio* advocated gradual revolutionary tactics in the workers' struggle. The other, *Il Domani* '*Periodico libertario*' (*Tomorrow, 'libertarian newspaper'*), was published in Cairo, from April 1903 to July of the same year, edited by Parrini and his comrades and it had a more individualist anarchist tone. As Dipaola notes of the London movement: 'the rivalry between these two groups was significant, even if they occasionally collaborated'.³⁰ In Egypt the same was true and the anarchist renaissance suffered a particularly hard setback as a result of the sudden death of Parrini in Mansura in 1906 and the departure from Egypt of Roberto D'Angiò. It was not until 1909 that anarchist

activities resumed and the ideological divisions among the Italian anarchists in Egypt were resolved.

The third period in our history begins in 1909 and ends with the outbreak of the First World War. In 1909 Francisco Ferrer Guardia, a Spanish libertarian pedagogue and thinker was executed by the Spanish authorities after being falsely accused of plotting the events of the Tragic Week in Catalonia in July 1909.³¹ His trial and execution sparked protests world-wide. In Alexandria, anarchists inaugurated the commemorative plaque at the Civil Cemetery, a common ground where the atheists of Alexandria – communists, Freemasons and anarchists – met. For the occasion, the anarchists also created a pro-Ferrer manifesto, a unique number with a brochure entitled *Egitto pro-Ferrer* (Pro-Ferrer Egypt). The following year, on 23 October 1910, a demonstration was organised and this finished at the Civil Cemetery. The Gruppo anarchico italiano (Italian Anarchist Group) participated with foreign activists (mainly Greeks), and the members of the Atheist Circle, Circle of Free Thought, and the workers members of the Workers League of the Socialist Section of Alexandria Carlo Pisacane.³²

In June 1909 the Circolo Ateo (the Atheist Circle) was formed in Alexandria in order to disseminate anti-religious and rationalist propaganda using various methods ‘conferences, reading clubs, conversations, and historic walks’.³³ This circle was organised and managed mostly by socialists and anarchists. On 5 September an assembly was held to discuss the publication of a new journal *L’Idea. Organo Libertario* (the Idea. Libertarian Organ) and a programme was approved unanimously by an anarchist tendency to recognise the possibility of cooperation with other parties and associations, above all, with trade unions and resistance leagues. Its goal was to work for an effective and practical propaganda. The fact that the new journal had two editorial houses, one in Cairo and the other in Alexandria, indicated that the activists from both cities had been able to arrive at an ideological and organisational accommodation following the death of Parrini. The immediate upshot of the agreement was the formation in August 1909 of the Federazione Internazionale (International Federation). This included workers from different nationalities and political tendencies: socialists, anarchists and trade unionists. Their statute stated that the organisation was meant to work for: ‘the emancipation of the workers and the immediate improvement of their live conditions throughout propaganda and the organization of the workers’.³⁴ The internationalist character of the Federation was demonstrated by its language policy: meetings and writings were in Italian, Greek and Arabic.

The federative and organisational push of the Alexandrian meeting, was short-lived, however. Divisions surfaced with significant consequences for the

effectiveness and strength of the movement. Pietro Vasai complained in March 1913 about these new disagreements in the pages of a new magazine called *Libera Tribuna* (Free Tribune). Its aim was once again to 'converge our efforts around a single goal, that is, against the prevailing power'.³⁵ The journal aimed to solve the newly emerging disagreements among anarchists. The same year, another newspaper *L'Unione* (The Union), was published, styled as 'the authority of all the workers' of Egypt, however, its publication stopped in October 1914. That year, Francesco Cini was nominated by his comrades as the representative of the Egyptian anarchists in the International Congress in London. Cancelled as a result of the outbreak of the war, the conference was the last collective action of the anarchist movement in Egypt since Pietro Vasai had by then contracted tuberculosis and returned to Naples in July 1916.

Beyond the internal factors that we have mentioned above, the outbreak of the First World War was a blow to the wider the anarchist movement in Egypt. Freedom of speech was suppressed and surveillance became a daily routine; expulsions were numerous and many were called up to fight on the front lines. Because of the lack of sources available, it is very difficult to trace the development of Italian anarchism in Egypt in the post-war period. Until the rise of fascism the available materials are discontinuous and very fragmented. It is clear, nonetheless, that the situation remained very difficult for activists. Some groups certainly survived, even if the post-war atmosphere made it very difficult to draw new members to the cause. But in the Italian community, the subversive spaces for political activity became non-existent. After 1918, the British authorities intensified surveillance and repression not only on anarchists but also on citizens of former capitulation members (nationalists, communists or anarchists) who were suspected of carrying out subversive activities. These were years when the nationalist struggles in Egypt also intensified. All political activities were curtailed, nationalists were interned, foreign anarchists were deported and newspapers were closed down.

By the time the repression eased in the 1920s, the subversive movement was linked to the rise of Bolshevism and anti-fascism. It was without doubt a very diverse mode of activism compared to the pre-First World War movement. The Italian activism that resumed in the '20s was composed of a completely new generation of activists and migrants who had almost no links with the previous generation of anarchists in Egypt. With the exception of individual cases, which we highlight in this article, it could be said the First World War marked a clear break in the history of the Italian anarchist movement in Egypt.³⁶

In the course of the '20s, Italian and other foreign anarchists and a few local ones, too, gradually withdrew from political activism. Because of the worsening

economic conditions in Egypt many of them returned to their home countries. Others, while not deviating from their ideas, retreated into private life. Only a few continued their militancy in syndicalism or the newly formed Socialist and Communist Parties.

While the available sources indicate that the anarchist movement in Egypt ceased its activities in the years of the First World War, anarchism – understood as an evolving movement within the territory, or as a development of a worldwide tendency – did not come to an end or fail to extend its influence at an organisational, political and intellectual level. The continuing history of the movement raises a fundamental question about the influence exerted by immigrant anarchists and anarchism as an international movement on the birth and/or evolution of political social and cultural movements in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century, as we will see in the case of al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya.

POST-FIRST WORLD WAR ANARCHISM: PERSONALITIES AND ACTIVITIES

A question that needs to be resolved at this point is the relation of anarchist activists, the so-called ‘foreigners’, with the ‘local’ Egyptian population. In addressing this question we need to remember that, with the exception of some circles and categories of migrant workers, anarchism in Egypt was a marginal movement, even within the labour movement. Focusing on worker solidarity and common rights, rather than on the ‘civilising’ mission of an Idea, anarchists active after the First World War were able to build consensus between the working and intellectual classes and create the first socialist and communist political organisations in the country.

At this juncture in the history of the Egyptian labour movement, Joseph Rosenthal became very significant as a bridge between the ‘foreign’ and ‘native’ movements. Rosenthal, who referred to himself as an Egyptian Jew, was born in Palestine in 1867 and arrived in Alexandria around 1899. Immediately after his arrival he started to engage in active militancy in various political organisations and unions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, his name was linked to the Italian anarchists in the city. He helped with the foundation of the Free Popular University in Alexandria and was a member of several workers’ leagues. In 1902, he opened a jewellery shop together with another anarchist activist, Leone Stone, an Egyptian citizen with English origins born in 1865. He was constantly watched by the police until his departure in 1928. In 1909, Rosenthal was one of the more prominent members of the Atheist Circle and one of the organisers of pro-Ferrer initiatives. In the same year he participated in the drafting of the newspaper *L’Idea*. After the end of the First World War, when the anarchist movement entered in a period of

decline, Joseph Rosenthal tried to unify the various leftist and syndicalist trends by spreading the ideals of social co-operation between working and intellectual classes and by encouraging the emergence of cultural associations. In 1921 he collaborated with other Italian anarchists and socialists, now outnumbered by Greek militants, in an organisation called 'La Clarté', defined by the Italian and the British authorities as 'Bolshevik' or 'communist'. Another organisation, the Group of Social Studies was also founded in this period, on the model of the association established in 1902 by Pietro Vasai. It had the same purpose of delivering free education to the working classes. The Atheist Circle and the Freethinkers Circle were still functioning.³⁷

At the same time, Rosenthal concentrated on building up the labour movement through its own representative institutions. In 1921 he was among the founders of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (General Confederation of Labour CGT), which became an important reference point in the labour struggle in Egypt. Immediately after, the Socialist Party of Egypt was founded and many local intellectuals joined. However, unwilling to follow orders from Moscow, Joseph Rosenthal was expelled from the party when it joined the Third International in 1922-1923 and changed its name to Egyptian Communist Party (PCF).³⁸ The official reason was 'his anarchist sympathies'.³⁹

Particularly important at the time was the role played by his daughter Charlotte Rosenthal, the wife of Constantine Weiss (alias Avigdor), elected in 1924 by the central committee of the Comintern to be its representative in Egypt. She was also in close contact with Italian anarchists in Egypt. She left Cairo clandestinely in 1928 with her husband and arrived in Moscow, where a few years later she was arrested and incarcerated, remaining in the Gulag until her release in 1956.

The biographical trajectory of Rosenthal is important to understand how half a century of anarchist activism has been influential in Egypt at least in regards to individual activists and, above all, the spread of a revolutionary, socialist, secular and atheist thought. At the same time, as we shall see below, militant anarchism undoubtedly helped to stimulate forms of struggle and the organisation of the Egyptian working class.

Giuseppe Pizzuto, an Egyptian anarchist-socialist typographer and a trade unionist, born in Cairo in 1890, was part of the Egyptian anarchist movement. His sister, Teresa Pizzuto, married Giovanni Macri, also an anarchist, editor of the Pietro Vasai's weekly *l'Unione*. In September 1919, Pizzuto was arrested and expelled from the Italian consulate following a British demand. At that time he was the secretary of the Chamber of Labour in Cairo and as such 'directed the strike of the printers of the Arab newspaper *Al-Mukattam* and was in charge of those projects designed for the services of light and water'.⁴⁰

Giuseppe Pizzuto was in fact the heir to an important organisational tradition of workers which Italian and Greek anarchists and socialists helped to boost, especially at the start of the twentieth century. This was the moment that the first mixed workers' organisations were formed and the first activities of the trade union struggle started. Social struggles and the labour movements had grown rapidly, and anarchists participated in strikes, sometimes supporting them and at other times directly organising them, (for example, the cigarette workers, printers, tailors, train drivers etc).

The presence of non-Egyptian communities (Italian, Greek, Armenian) workers was very relevant at this point. The cigarette workers were the elite of the working class, among other reasons because of the large number of foreign workers in its cadres: there was a big gap between foreign and local workers in terms of their rights and status. European workers sometimes adopted attitudes of superiority even though the organisations they were involved in discouraged this. This added to the distrust between workers. The first nationalists, most of them hostile to the idea of social revolution that emerged from within the labour movement, talked about anarchism in negative terms as if it was 'practically purely Western'.⁴¹ The nationalists also feared that social revolution would create a movement that would become organised and powerful, even in the first decade of the twentieth century and especially during the war.

For their part, the Italian anarchists were not interested in the colonial question (of which they themselves were part). Orientalist images appeared in their discourses in all the newspapers and publications the Italian anarchists published, sometimes with a racist tone. Needless to say that the Italian anarchist movement in Egypt, which represented itself as an internationalist and anti-imperialist movement, never formulated a critical discourse with the capitulation system in order to criticise its own privileges.

The national question and the labour questions could not be easily separated in 1919. A great nationalist upsurge took place in Egypt, as in other colonies (India, China, Turkey). With the declaration of the British protectorate in Egypt in 1914, the Ottoman Empire lost its sovereignty over the country. This was the moment for the re-emergence of the nationalist movement. The economic grievances and social difficulties that the Egyptians faced after their participation in the war led the nationalists, who mostly belonged to the newly-born *effendiyya* class (bourgeois nationalist), to organise anti-colonial struggle in Egypt.

This situation led to unprecedented unrest in the streets of Egypt. Resistance to British rule took various forms in 1919 including demonstrations, boycotts, and various acts of terrorism. On 11 November 1919, Saad Zaghlul, the most prominent

Egyptian nationalist figure at the moment, requested that the High Commissioner, Reginald Wingate, end the British protectorate in Egypt and the Sudan. This request gave birth to the Wafd Party together with unrest at the grassroots. The social mobilisation that Wafd Party members, most of them landowners, induced in the local area led to the arrest of Zaghlul and his subsequent exile to Malta. The British hoped the arrest would dampen the protests. It had the opposite effect. Many students and workers took to the streets to call for the end of British rule in Egypt. Indeed, the 1919 Revolution forced the British Empire to issue a declaration of independence in 1922, while still retaining significant economic and territorial ties between the colony and the metropole. In 1920, Wafd took control of the Parliament in Egypt and it was at the same time subordinated to the executive power of the king – until Nasser led the 1952 Revolution by the Free Officers. At the beginning of its rule in Egypt, Wafd had social support from the streets (bourgeois capitalists, landowners, workers and students). However, this support did not last for long. Wafd's relationship with the monarchy, which still enjoyed strong ties with the British (still present in the territory) and the failure to mobilise youth meant that support drained away in the mid '20s.

With the emergence of a mass nationalist movement in 1919, the labour movements also re-emerged in strong opposition to the British Empire. The food shortages, inflation and increases in unemployment created by the impact of war drove many workers to the very edge of subsistence.⁴² The Cairo Tramway Workers was a major force during the Revolution. Their activism was very much influenced by anarchism, so too was that of the Rail workers and the Cigarette workers in Cairo and Alexandria. According to Anthony Gorman (2010):

Nationalists were also influenced by the strategies and tactics of anarchism at home and abroad. The likelihood of the Università Popolare Libera (Free Popular University) influencing nationalist education policy has been mentioned. It seems clear the anarchist organization had influence on nationalist political activity more generally as well.⁴³

The Cigarette Workers were the first to fight and organise the labour movement after 1919. Labour activism was a great force in the development of Egyptian politics during the Interwar period. In Alexandria the Manual Trades Workers Union (MTWU) was revived by unionists in co-operation with the Nationalist Party. It tried to unite all the Egyptian workers and artisans. The agreements between the MTWU and the Nationalist Party made clear that these two actors wanted to monopolise the Egyptian working class in Alexandria.

Syndicalist and labour movements were forces that the major hegemonic players the nationalist bourgeoisie party on one hand, and the Communist and Socialist Parties on the other, wanted on their side. This explains why the British asked for the immediate expulsion from Egypt of Pizzuto. He was accused of 'maintaining the country in a status of continuous anti-British and nationalist campaign',⁴⁴ and his presence was described as a 'real danger for the State'.⁴⁵ The same concerns were behind the state of repression that Saad Zaghloul, the first prime minister elected after 1919 revolution, launched against the newly born Communist Party and the radical opposition in general.

The re-emergence of an anarchist thought: Jamaa' Al-Fann We Al-Hurriyya

The anarchist movement deeply influenced the intellectual history of Egypt. Between 1914 and 1937 anarchism was relegated to the background of Egyptian history, but in the late 1930s, a new libertarian political culture emerged and the art movement al-Jama'a al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya (Art and Liberty Group)⁴⁶ was at the forefront. Although, al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya certainly represents another chapter in the history of anarchism in Egypt, there is no evidence linking the emergence of this new internationalist and radical culture within the arts to the first wave of anarchism in the Italian and Greek communities. Of course, it is possible that connections between these two experiences exist, but the causes of the emergence of this new radical political culture is tightly tied to the international political context, specifically to the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe on the one hand, and the splintering of a young generation from the old parliamentary groups in Egypt, on the other.

Between 1920 and 1939, Wafd was the largest political party in Egypt. It was considered to be far too close to the British authorities and it was clear to many that parliamentary politics was in fact a game played by the monarchy and a few political parties, with the Wafd. It did not satisfy demands for social justice and democracy advanced by the Egyptian population and it stimulated the emergence of opposition groups, notably Misr al-Fattah (Young Egypt), an group influenced by the Italian fascist organisation Camice Nere, the Ikhwan al-Muslimin (The Muslim Brotherhood) founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928 and the Communist Party in 1920. The anti-Stalinist and anti-authoritarian artistic group of al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya was part of this opposition.

A group of intellectuals, radical activists, writers, and artists led by Georges Henein (1914-1973),⁴⁷ son of a Coptic minister in the government of King Fuad I and an Italian mother, signed in 1938 the manifesto 'The Degenerate Art is

Alive'.⁴⁸ This vividly criticised authoritarian regimes, modern institutions and society for prohibiting creativity and free expression and for promoting a 'fanatical racist, religious and nationalistic path which certain individuals wish modern art to follow'.⁴⁹ The manifesto was a response to the Nazi *entarte kunst* exhibitions at Munich in 1937.⁵⁰ By the time it was signed, the activities and encounters of the group had already been underway since 1937, however, al-Fann we al-Hurriyya was founded on 9 January 1939 with the intention of liberating society from all repressive regimes and forms of oppression.

al-Jama'a al-Fann we al-Hurriyya was formed by a very heterogeneous group and its members came from different backgrounds and origins. Most of them were a mix of revolutionary figures united by their anti-Stalinist, anti-repression, anti-Imperialist and libertarian stance. It included some anarchists, among them the Italian exile artist Angelo de Riz and the artist Ramses Younan (1913-1966), who, by the time he returned to Cairo in 1956, was a long-standing anarchist-individualist.⁵¹ It also included the brothers Fuad Kamel (1919-1973) and Anwar Kamel (1919-1973), the editor chief of their magazine *al-Tatawwur* (*Development*),⁵² Marie Cavadia (1901-1970), the writer Albert Cossary (1913-2008) and Kamel al-Telmisany (1915-1972) the Egyptian surrealist artist and film director. Not all of them were surrealists, and many of them belonged to other artistic or political tendencies.⁵³ They normally met every afternoon in Tommy's bar, a well-known watering-hole that had been frequented by Allied troops, to discuss, debate and organise the group's activities.⁵⁴ The 'salon' and the study group were used as a spaces of discussion, affinity and for the dissemination of their ideas, recalling the activities of the first wave of anarchists in Egypt in the years leading up to 1914. Les Essayistes (the Attempters) pre-dated the foundation of al-Fann we al-Hurriyya. Many of its members were part of the magazine *Un Effort* (1929-1937) which published articles on culture, society, politics and arts written in French. It also published a little dictionary: *Fragments du petit Larousse illustré. Dictionnaire à l'usage du monde bourgeois* (*Fragments of a Little Larousse illustrated. Dictionary of usage of the bourgeois world*) where they defined anarchism as 'victory of the spirit over certainty' and police as 'assassinant dirigé' (state violence).⁵⁵

Although it has been said in the literature that al-Fann we al-Hurriyya merely replicated European surrealism, we see throughout our analysis that members were interested in organising independently of their international counterparts (although always connected with them). They were keen to tackle the specific problems of Egyptian society and their members prioritised the use of the Arabic language in their writings. Ramses Younan and Georges Henein were already part of *al-Majalla al-Jadida* (*The New Magazine*) published by the Egyptian Fabian

and socialist, Salama Musa (1887-1958) who ceded the editorship of the magazine to Ramses Younan in 1942. *al-Majalla al-Jadida*, whose discourse was radicalised when Younan and Henein edited it, was published in Arabic and was a real impulse for the later publication of the group's magazine *Al-Tatawwur* (*Development*) (1939-1941). *Al-Tatawwur*, which was edited by Anwar Kamel, who was especially interested in Arabic as the language for the transmission of the group's ideas, addressed many controversial topics: freedom of expression and desire, women rights, sexuality, prostitution, education, anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, the place of culture in Egypt, as well as the question of the peasant (fellah), one of the topics forgotten by the Egyptian communists. Moreover, the concept of 'freedom' that they used was really connected to the concept of freedom in anarchism, as explained by Faisal Abdelrahim Shahinder: 'The further the human spirit has gone to imagine how to liberate itself from limits and frontiers, is what anarchism has said in the sentence: 'Ni dieu ni maître (no Gods nor masters)'.⁵⁶ They also published another magazine *al-Majalla al-Kifah al-Ijtimai*. This was banned in 1944 and Younan was subsequently imprisoned and expelled to France.⁵⁷

The activities of the group were not just confined to the written word. They also organised films screenings, political debates and five art exhibitions. The group tendency to break with bourgeois norms, as Sam Bardaouil (2013) mentions, can be also detected in the spatial rupture of their exhibitions from the classical art galleries. According to Patrick Kane '[a] prevailing feature of these artist associations was their anarchic stance and a pronounced counter-academic stance'.⁵⁸ This was exemplified in the Ma'arid al-Fann al-Hurr (The Exhibitions of the Free Art) that took place from 1940 to 1945. One of them took place in Immobilia building. The layout was designed as a labyrinth with 'handshaped cutouts upside-down posters hanging along the way in an attempt to confuse rather than guide'.⁵⁹ In fact, according to Maria Cavadia, an Egyptian artist sympathetic to the group's activities, the intention of the organisers were to rid 'the visitors of their daily honest little logic, rife with bourgeois imagery that life challengingly throws before our eyes'.⁶⁰ The exhibitions were not only spaces for display but also performances in themselves. There was singing and dancing as the visitors viewed the exhibits. These exhibitions contested the nationalist institutionalised art of the previous generation of Egyptian artists, particularly the work of the sculptor Mahmud Moukhtar (1898-1934), the School of Fine Arts in Cairo and the al-Nahdah project (the Arabic Renaissance).

Jesse Cohn (2013) suggests that: 'rather than situating anarchisant writers by political "commitments" or "alignments", we have to think in terms of "traditions", "affinities" and ... "networks"'.⁶¹ When talking about al-fann we al-Hurriyya as an

expression of anarchism in Egypt we intend to demonstrate how their affinities and activities, their form and their content contributed to another chapter in the history of anarchism in Egypt. Members of al-Fann we al-Hurriyya were importantly members of transnational affinity networks. Their relations with their French comrades are the best known. Georges Henein was deeply connected with French surrealists, Marxists and Trotskyites, and he signed the FIARI manifesto (For an Independent Revolutionary Art) a manifesto penned by André Breton and Leon Trotsky in 1938. Members of al-Fann we al-Hurriyya have usually been treated as Trotskyists as a result, though Henein never considered himself as such. The historian Bashir Syba'i considers that this labelling is a misrepresentation and that the evidence to call al-Fann we al-Hurriyya Trotskyite is still lacking.⁶²

The connection of al-Fann we al-Hurriyya group with the Italian anti-fascist activities in Egypt have not been studied and this story is also key to understand their transnational connections and their affinity networks. Many Italian anti-fascists fled to Egypt during the worse years of fascism in Italy, mainly after 1938, although most of the Italian community in Egypt at the time of fascism were mostly fascists – with a marginalised group of communists and anarchists.⁶³ The fascist presence was a major concern for the British authorities, who were afraid of the consequences that this could have for the Italian intervention in Ethiopia. When Paolo Vitorelli (1915-2003), active in Paris since 1929, started *Giustizia e Libertà*⁶⁴ (Justice and Freedom) in 1940, the Italian anti-fascists in Egypt were divided between the communists, social liberals and the 'new antifascists'.⁶⁵ The activities of the Italian anti-fascists in Egypt were complicated not only for ideological reasons but also by the constraints imposed by the authorities. Broadcasters on the Italian programmes on Radio Cairo (organised by Fausta Cialente (1898-1994) who had been in Alexandria since 1921), had to moderate their language to meet the requirements of the Italian consulate and the British and Egyptian authorities, and avoid offending their target audiences. Although Radio Cairo was an excellent opportunity to spread anti fascist ideas to the Italian community in Egypt, its discourse was not as radical as expected.⁶⁶

Links between *Giustizia e Libertà* and the Italian antifascists in Egypt and al-Fann we al-Hurriyya were made by the artist and writer Stefano Terra (1917-1986). In contact with more radical groups in Italy and with the branch of *Giustizia e Libertà* in Egypt, he became friendly with Georges Heinein, who had been writing regularly in the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà* (*Notebooks of Justice and Freedom*) since 1944. Other links were forged by the Italian magazine *Libera Italia* published in Egypt. The journal extensively covered the activities of al-Fann we al-Hurriyya group and was very much acclaimed by Italian audiences.

The group al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya were put under surveillance by the Egyptian authorities in 1945 when the Egyptian government established a Supreme Court of Security. According to Henein, forty-five of their members were arrested including Anwar Kamel, author of pamphlet first published in the magazine *Al-Fajr al-Jadid* called 'For a Classless Society' (1945).⁶⁷ Kamel had in fact split the group by the time of his arrest and had founded al-Huzb wa al-Hurriyya (Bread and Freedom group). This had a more political stance than al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya. In 1940 Kamel had set out to Egyptianise the cadres of al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya. The changes of 'art' and 'bread' in the names of the groups signalled his intention to focus group activities on Egyptian workers and labour organisations. The membership the group was also significantly different, recruiting from the workers of Cairo's Shubra al-Khaima and Matariyya suburbs, mostly mechanics, students, industrial, printer and textile workers. Subsequently turning to Trotskyism. Bread and Freedom is best classified as a dissident communist and Marxist group that fought against imperialism and helped in the anti-fascist movement in Egypt. Much research is still needed to clarify its ideological stance and influences, but it can certainly be said that it took a step away from the libertarian al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya, which has been wrongly relegated to a marginalised position in the history of Arab socialism in the region.

IN A NUTSHELL

The history of anarchism in Egypt has been marginalised in the main reference books on anarchism and wrongly understood as part of the core European history. This framing explains why there are so few studies of anarchism in the Southern Mediterranean regions. The arrival of Italian exiles in Egypt and the development of mixed trade unions, even if connected with the development of anarchism in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century, created and disseminated a political philosophy whose influences and ramifications in the decolonisation struggles are still poorly understood. According to the available sources, there were no links (that we can trace) between the anti-colonial and nationalist movement and the anarchist movements in Egypt, at least until 1914. Contrary to what happened in the Indian case, where anti-colonial and radical anti-statist movements influenced by anarchism worked hand-in-hand in decolonisation struggles, the Italian anarchist movement in Egypt openly defended its own privilege, even while discussing the domination of the west in the east. The discourse focused on class, as a universalist category, without taking in consideration the question of race as part of the inter-sections of the colonialist and capitalist domination towards the colonised. Indeed, when the question of race was discussed, the literature was full of stereotypical

and racist imagery. Motivated by their missionary principle of spreading the ‘idea’, the Italian anarchists in Egypt were incapable of valuing the different dimensions of oppression and inequality in the society they were inhabiting. Their discourse on class as a universal category and their strategies for emancipation of labour did not attract the support of the nationalist movement or the urban bourgeoisie and rural landowners who led it.⁶⁸ After the First World War, anarchism re-emerged through its transnational networks, despite the best efforts of the British Italian and Egyptian authorities. In the interwar period, the artistic and revolutionary group al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya, tailored radical discourses against institutionalised art, education and sexuality and for freedom to local politics and language. It has been wrongly marginalised in the history of the Egyptian left.

The first wave of Italian workers and political exiles in Egypt and the development of al-Fann wa al-Hurriyya group in the interwar period are two of the many examples illustrating how anarchism was formulated, reformulated, developed and disseminated. We understand that there is a need to study the history and experiences of anarchism and libertarian ideas in Egypt, and by extension, in the Southern Mediterranean regions, in order to trace a forgotten history within the dominant nationalist and Marxist historiographies. To understand the history of the anarchist experiences in the South of the Mediterranean is essential to fully comprehend the re-emergence of anarchism and anarchist practices with the 2011 Revolution.⁶⁹

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NOTES

1. Although there are not major studies of the Greek anarchist community in Egypt, some contextual information can be found in Gorman, A.P., 2002, ‘Egypt’s Forgotten Communists: The Postwar Greek Left’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 20 (1): 1-27.

2. According to a report on the Italian colony established in Egypt in 1868 addressed to the government of the new kingdom of Italy, there were around 30,000 Italians in total in the country, approximately 18,000 in Alexandria and 6,000 in Cairo. Anthony Santilli, 'Penser et analyser le cosmopolitisme. Le cas des Italiens d'Alexandrie au XIXe siècle', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, 125 (2013), Available at: <https://mefrim.revues.org/1516>
3. 4 March 1869, ASMAE, Political Report, box 1296.
4. October 1873, ASMAE, Political Report, box 1296.
5. M. Bardinet, 2013, *Être ou devenir italien au Caire de 1861 à la première guerre mondiale*, (Paris, 3: Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), pp348.
6. Leonardo Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, (Firenze: Crescita politica editrice, 1976), p303
7. Ugo I. Parrini was born in Livorno in 1850. He was a typographer who, after joining the Paris Commune, migrated to Egypt in 1871. He had some contact with the Mazzinian circle Pensiero e Azione. In 1877 he founded the anarchist newspapers *Il Lavoratore*, that was later called *Il Proletario*. He also collaborated with Errico Malatesta while in Egypt. For more information about his life refer to: Parrini Audiberto Icilio Ugo, *Dizionario Biografico degli Anarchici Italiani*, (Pisa: BFS, 2004, Vol. II), pp300-301.
8. 18 April report, 1873, ASMAE, Political Report, box 1296.
9. I. Khuri-Makdisi, 2010, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914*, (Los Angeles, London: University of California Press), pp27.
10. L'idea is one of the ways that the Italian anarchist at the time referred to anarchism. In fact, in 1901 a newspaper named *L'Idea* was published in Egypt.
11. We decided to use the term 'Idea' in this section since it was used by the Italian anarchists at the time. However it is important to note Süreyya Evren's critique *What is anarchism? A reflection on the canon and the constructive potential of its destruction*, PhD (Loughborough University, 2012). For Evren, the anarchist canon or what has been commonly known as 'classical anarchism' has been constructed around a group of nineteenth-century anarchist theorists '[...] usually positioned as a fixed ideology that is represented through the work of a select band of nineteenth-century anarchist writers – writers whose thoughts are reduced to certain clusters of ideas that only help to confirm prejudices about the nature of "classical anarchism"' (pp20).
12. The study of the consulate and international police reports reflects a close relation between immigration and the spread of anarchist propaganda even inside the national territory. This is the case of Giovanni Alberganti, anarchist activist in Mansura. Cfr. personal profile at ASMAE, Egyptian Embassy in Cairo, Anarchici, box 68, fasc. 5. Also it is very interesting the activism of some Italian anarchists in Sudan. Cfr.

- ASMAE, Egyptian Embassy in Cairo, Schiavitù nel Sudan e anarchici (Slavery in Sudan and the Anarchists), box 113, fasc. 1/7.
13. Andrea Costa was an Italian socialist activist born in Imola. He co-founded the Partito dei Lavoratori Italiano after he renounced his anarchist ideas in 1879. His withdrawal from anarchism was a great blow for the anarchist community in Italy and Egypt.
 14. Anthony Gorman, 'Socialisme en Égypte avant la Première Guerre mondiale: la contribution des anarchistes', *Cahiers D' Histoire. Revue D' Histoire Critique*, 106 (2008): 47-64. Available at: <https://chrhc.revues.org/1241>
 15. Giovanni Passanante (1849-1910) was a young republican who attacked Umberto I in a parade in Naples. With a knife in his hand and hidden in the crowd, he approached the car yelling: 'Long Life Orsini, Long life the universal republic!', For more information see Giuseppe Galzerano, *Giovanni Passannante. La vita, l'attentato, il processo, la condanna a morte, la grazia 'regale' e gli anni di galera del cuoco lucano che nel 1878 ruppe l'incantesimo monarchico*, (Casalvelino Scalo: Galzerano Editore, 2004).
 16. L. Bettini, 1976, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, (Firenze: Crescita politica editrice), pp305.
 17. Ahmad Orabi (1841-1911) was an official and an Egyptian politician who became famous because he supported an uprising against the British authorities and for the complete autonomy of Egypt (against the Ottomans and the Europeans), in an internal political revolution with a constitutionally tendency.
 18. Pier Carlo Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta*, (Milano, 1969), pp336 -337.
 19. From his youth Francesco Cini (1850-19), originally from Livorno, was close to internationalist circles in Italy. In 1874 he met Andrea Costa and was in contact with him. Not long afterwards he went to Egypt where he was an important figure for the anarchists (with more socialist tendencies). He returned to Livorno in 1883. In 1887 he returned to Egypt, already married with Assunta Giuntoli, in order to escape arrest. See Francesco Cini, *Dizionario biografico*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp406-407.
 20. Roberto D'Angiò (1871-1923) was originally from Foggia. In his youth he came into contact with anarchist ideas in Naples. In fact, due to his personality, he soon became close with Errico Malatesta. Given the several prosecutions that he faced in Italy, he decided to go to Egypt under the invitation of Ugo I. Parrini and Pietro Vasai. He stayed for four years. He participated in the publication of several newspapers, *L'Operaio* and *Lux!*. See Roberto D'Angiò, *Dizionario biografico*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp489-490.
 21. Luigi Galleani (1861-1931) was an Italian anarchist famous for his role in the development of the anarchist movement in the United States from 1901 to 1919. He came into contact with anarchist ideas during his university years. In order to escape police persecution, he fled to France, where he remained for twenty years and became close to Elisée Reclus. Once he returned to Italy, he spent more than five years imprisoned

- and under house arrest on the island of Pantelleria, Sicily. In 1900, he went to Egypt where he stayed for several months. Under the close surveillance of the consulate authorities, he was searched prior to extradition to Italy. For that reason, he departed first to London and then to the United States. See Luigi Galleani, *Dizionario biografico*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 654-657.
22. Pietro Vasai (1866-1916) was originally from Florence. At the age of seventeen he started to visit the 'Amilcare Cipriani Circle'. He was arrested several times in Italy and for that reason he fled to Tunisia first and then to Egypt. According to Bettini, he was midway between the organisational and individualist tendencies of the anarchist community in Egypt. Together with Joseph Rosenthal, he published an anarchist newspaper called *La Tribuna Libera* in Italian and French. See: Pietro Vasai, *Dizionario biografico*, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 658-659.
 23. M. Colucci, 'Il processo degli anarchici di Alessandria d'Egitto con il processo e la condanna di Mario Bazzani svoltosi alla Corte di assise di Ancona nel maggio 1899' (The trial of the anarchists from Alexandria, Egypt, with the trial and conviction of Mario Bazzani when he addressed Ancona's court in May 1899), Alessandria d'Egitto, A. Serafini (1899)
 24. 'Preteso complotto contro S.M. Imperatore d'Austria', (Purported plot against the Austrian Emperor), Alexandrian Consulate, 30 May 1902, box n. 87.
 25. For more information see: Anthony Gorman, 'Anarchists in Education: The Free Popular University in Egypt (1901)', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41(3) (2005): 303-320.
 26. 9 June Report, 1902, ASMAE archive, Italian Embassy in Cairo, Anarchici, box. 86, fasc. 1.
 27. Enrico Pea was an Italian poet and writer. At the age of sixteen he went to Egypt to search for work. In the city of Alexandria he worked in different sectors and founded La Baracca Rosa, a circle of radical activists, among them socialists and anarchists. For more information about his stay in Egypt see his book, *Vita in Egitto* (Milan, 1949).
 28. Giuseppe Ungaretti was a famous Italian writer and poet born in Alexandria in Egypt in 1888. Although not a declared anarchist, he published several articles in the anarchist newspaper *Risorgete!*, edited by Enrico Pea. He was also a member of the group La Baracca Rosa.
 29. Bettini, op. cit., p. 285.
 30. P. Dipaola, 2004, *Italian anarchists in London (1870-1914)*, PhD, (Goldsmiths University of London), pp. 12.
 31. The Tragic Week was the name given to events from 25 July to 2 August 1902 when Spanish authorities clashed with the working classes in Barcelona and other cities in Catalonia.
 32. 9 August Report, 1909, State Central Archives, Interior Ministry, D.G.P.S., 1910, box. 6.

33. Atheist Circle programme, 9/08/1909.
34. 3 August 1909, State Central Archives, Interior Ministry, D.G.P.S., 1910, box. 6.
35. *Tribuna Libera*, 18 March 1913, n°1.
36. M. Petricioli, 2007, *Oltre il mito. L'Egitto degli italiani (1918-1947)*, (Milano: Bruno Mondadori), pp363-372.
37. Anthony Gorman, 'Diverse In Race, Religion And Nationality ... But United In Aspirations Of Civil Progress: The Anarchist Movement In Egypt 1860-1940', in S. Hirsch and Lucien, Van Der Walt (eds.), *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940*, pp3-31, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), p26.
38. Politically, he grew up as an anarchist although he became, after the Russian Revolution, a key member in the Communist Party of Egypt. However, from the very beginning, the Egyptian Communist Party was marked by internal conflict over policy and strategy. Rosenthal was considered one of the most radical members, and refused to follow the orders of the Comintern. Among the conditions of affiliation the Comintern imposed on the Egyptian Communist Party was: 1. the end of the Capitulations, 2. equal pay for Egyptian and foreign workers, and 3. expulsion of Rosenthal from the party, probably due to his anarchist past.
39. Güdram Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt 1914-1952*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989) p174.
40. M. Petricioli, 2007, *Oltre il mito. L'Egitto degli italiani (1918-1947)*, (Milano: Bruno Mondadori), pp74-76.
41. For the relationship between the labour movement and the nationalist movement see: Joel Beinin & Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile*, (London: Tauris, 1987), pp121-171.
42. Ibid., p85.
43. Gorman, 2010. 'Diverse In Race, Religion And Nationality', op. cit., p29.
44. Diplomatic Agency 24/09/1919 in Pizzuto, Giuseppe personal profile, Central State Archive, *Casellario Politico Centrale*, box 4032.
45. Ibid.
46. The translation 'Art and Liberty' has caused a great deal of debate within the academic circles. In her article, Alexandra Dika Suggerman (2013) problematises this question. While Jama'at al-Fann we al-Hurriyya has been translated as 'Art and Liberty' (by Don LaCoss) and as 'Art and Freedom' by others such as herself, since "freedom" better translates the original as it captures the active, rupturing nature of the group's ideals', we decided that we will keep the original name of the group in our article in order to understand its meaning within its own cultural and linguistic context.
47. For more information about the author's biography and his literary work see S. Alexandrian, (1981), *Georges Henein*, (Paris: Editions Seghers), and G. Henein,

- Ouvres. Poèmes, récits, essais, articles et pamphlets*, P. Vilar, M. Kober, & D. Lançon (eds.), 2006, (Paris: Denoël).
48. See the manifesto in French and English. Available at: <http://www.egyptiansurrealism.com/index.php?/contents/manifesto/> (accessed 28.10.2015).
 49. Ibid.
 50. Patrick Kane, *The Politics of Arts in Modern Egypt: Aesthetics, Ideology and Nation Building*, (London: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, 2013), p56.
 51. F. Rosemont & R. D.G. Jekkey (eds.), 2009, *Black, Brown and Beige. Surrealist writings from Africa and the Diaspora*, (Austin: University of Texas Press), p161.
 52. In a polemical debate between Aziz Ahmad Fahmi, the art critic of the liberal newspaper of *al-Risala*, where he described al-Fann wa al-Hurriya as a 'degenerate' art group, and Anwar Kamel who described the group in the newspaper as an anarchist group. See Anwar Kamil, 'Jama'a al-Fann wa al-Hurriya' *al-Risala*, no. 317 (31 July, 1939), pp1520-21.
 53. R. Creagh, 'Tempêtes libertaires Georges Hénein, Ramsès Younane, et le mouvement surréaliste en Égypte (1937-1963)', *Réfractions*, (34), (2015): 138-152.
 54. We do not know the exact location of Tommy's bar in Cairo. Neither are we clear about its importance as a meeting space for dissemination of radical ideas. However, it looks like Tommy's bar was a place for reunion for Allied soldiers. See P. Duggan-Smith, 1997. *Don't Tell My Mother: How to Fight War on Your Own Terms*, (Ottawa: The Golden Dog Press).
 55. *Fragments du petit Larousse illustré. Dictionnaire à l'usage du monde bourgeois* (*Fragments of a Little Larousse illustrated. Dictionary of the use of the bourgeois world*), *Un Effort*, n.51, (Cairo, 1935): 22.
 56. Shahinder Abdelrahim, Faisal 'al-hudud wa al-quyud' (Limitations and Restrictions), *al-Tatawwur* n. 2, (February, 1940): 12.
 57. Creagh, 'Tempêtes libertaires Georges Hénein, Ramsès Younane, et le mouvement surréaliste en Égypte (1937-1963)', p150.
 58. Kane, *The Politics of Arts in Modern Egypt*, p58.
 59. S. Bardaouil, 2013, "Dirty Dark Loud and Hysteric": The London and Paris Surrealist Exhibitions of the 1930s and the Exhibition Practices of the Art and Liberty Group in Cairo', *Dada/Surrealism*, 19 (1): 7.
 60. Cavadia in Bardouiol, op. cit., 2013, p7.
 61. J. Cohn, 2013, 'Surrealists and Anarchists, Affinities and Resistances: A Response to Gifford', *Global Review*, (1): 107.
 62. See B. Syba'i, 'Hawl ma yusammi "al-Trotskyiyya al-Misriyya" baina 'ami 1938 we 1948' ('On what is called "Egyptian Trotskyism" between 1938 and 1948') in *Ta'rikh Misr baina al-Minhaj al-'Alami wa al-Sira' al-Hizbi*, (Cairo: Dar Shuhdi lil-nashr, 1987), pp395-407.

63. In 1925 there were still some communist and anarchists Italian militants in Cairo, even if they were scarce. Among them it is important to highlight Stabile Luci, Stabile Tobia and Mascaro Ortensio, expelled later by the Italian consulate as requested by the Egyptian Interior Ministry. Cfr. 9 March 1920, ASMAE, Political Reports, box 198. According to the detailed examination of the archives by Marta Petricioli, in a report produced by the Legazione del Cairo at the request of the Italian Government in order to track down the Italian residents in Egypt who professed anti-fascists ideas, it was underlined that among the ones under surveillance, twelve were self-defined socialists, eleven self-defined anarchists, six were communists, two republicans, five masons and the 'rest had general anti-fascist ideas'. See: M. Petricioli, (2007), *Oltre il mito. L'Egitto degli italiani (1918-1947)*, (Milano: Bruno Mondadori), pp370-371.
64. Its founder, Paolo Vittorelli (1915-2003) had been a member of Giustizia e Libertà since 1936. In 1940 he was sent to Cairo to finance the activities of the group. For several reasons, among them the invasion of France by the German army, he stayed in the country for longer than expected, and this is how the activities of GL started in Cairo. For almost four years, the activities of GL were directed towards anti-fascist propaganda in the region, Italian military prisoners by the British in Egyptian camps, etc. Together with other activist present in Egypt, Umberto Calosso, Enzo Sereni and Stefano Terra, the group published a weekly magazine called *Giustizia e Libertà* (1944).
65. We decided to call the 'new antifascists' those who by 1938, when Italian fascism had a more racist tone, decided to fight against fascism, but whom till that point, were close to fascism and fascist ideas: 'E la maggior parte di questi antifascisti italiani d'Egitto, quelli soprattutto di origine massonica od ebraica, fino al '38 erano stati fascisti: questo naturalmente aggiungeva motivi di contrasto con cui non valeva nemmeno la pena di perdere tempo' (the vast majority of these Italian antifascists in Egypt, those who above all were from a Masonic or Jewish origin, until 1938 were fascists), in P. Bagnoli, *Roselli, Gobetti, e la rivoluzione democratica. Uomini e idee tra liberalismo e socialismo*, (Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1996), pp249.
66. Bagnoli, *Roselli, Gobetti, e la rivoluzione democratica*, p247.
67. D. Renton, *Dissident Marxism: Past Voices for Present Times*, (London, New York: Zed Books, 2004), p95.
68. For more information about the racist and colonialist discourse of the Italian anarchists in Egypt please see: Costantino Paonessa, 'Anarchismo e colonialismo: breve storia degli anarchici italiani in Egitto (1860 – 1914)', *Studi Storici* (in print).
69. L. Galian, 'New Modes of Collective Actions: The Reemergence of Anarchism in Egypt', in F. Gerges (ed.), *Contentious Politics in the Middle East. Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism beyond the Arab Uprisings*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015) pp351-372.